

Aluminum coin of Durango, etc.

Smith, Fred Sumner  
[chester, CT]

1924-1929

August 7th, 1924

Dr. Fred Sumner Smith  
Chester, Conn.

Dear Dr. Smith:

I am very glad to hear from you, and will answer your questions to the best of my ability.

No. 1 is a straight Governmental coin of Mexico City. These have gradually been reduced in size.

Your 1914 Durango in aluminum is new to me. I think I have a record of your five-cent piece in brass. Your other piece, No. 4, I cannot quite place. Could you not send me rubbings or plaster impressions of Nos. 2, 3 and 4 which you list in your letter?

No. 5 I cannot quite make out from your description. Could I not see a rubbing or a cast?

Your piece with BOLO on - I understand that these were made at the various mints as Baptismal pieces. We have one or two of these, though I admit that they look too crude for Governmental issues.

The Rimac piece is simply a store card.

You are quite right about your Brazilian piece. They come from Maranhao, with an M and an X, or an X X, below in a sunken rectangle, and, also, with an incuse M, without any denomination.

The worn silver coin with fl eur-de-lis is not West Indian, but a re-issue in France of worn silver accumulated at the Mint. I cannot remember off-hand whether this was in the 1600's or 1700's.

I am inclined to think that your other silver piece with several counterstamps is not official.

If some time you come to New York, I shall be glad to see any of your puzzles, but please let me know several days in advance as I am not at the office every day this summer.

Very truly yours,

Curator



FRED. SUMNER SMITH, M. D.  
CHESTER, CONN.

18 August 1934

Mr. Howland Wood,  
Dear Sir;

I am very tardy in thanking you for your help, but have been waiting to hear from the party who sold me the Durango 1e in aluminum. I wrote him to send me "a couple more" of them. This morning I received an answer enclosing a single one, the "only one" he had, so I am sending it to you as a sort of thank offering, and when I have the opportunity, shall follow it up personally with a pocket full of puzzles.

My vacation plans seem to be going wrong, so I may not be able to see you for some time, but it will be as soon as possible.

Very truly yours

Fred Sumner Smith

September 4th, 1924

Dr. Fred Sumner Smith  
Chester, Conn.

Dear Sir:

Owing to my being absent on vacation, I have delayed replying to your letter until today.

Thank you very much for sending on the Durango aluminum coin. I am inclined to think that this piece was never issued and that it was shamscock of some die-cutter who made them, but never having received the money, did not let them out of his possession. Otherwise, I feel certain that I should have seen them some years ago. Had they been in circulation, presumably there would have been no need for the crude pieces that were issued.

I shall be at the Museum during the month of September in case you should come to New York.

Very truly yours,

Curator



FRED. SUMNER SMITH, M. D.

CHESTER, CONN.

25 March 1925

Mr. Howland Wood,

Dear Mr. Wood;

*on some  
pieces  
clearly  
die*  
Figure #35 in your "Coinage of the West Indies" shows a silver piece of St Martin etstp'd St M in a circle of dots. You mention the cstp of a fleur de lis and large M on the Cayenne sous, but I do not find mention of the first-mentioned counterstamp on any but the silver coins.

I picked up one of the Cayenne sous with the St M in a circle of dots just like the illustration #35, a short time ago. Perhaps you mention it and I overlooked it. If not, I thought you might be interested. It looks genuine to me.

I hope to be at Elder's sale April 9, 10, 11, and shall try to find time to call on you with a peck of troubles in my pocket.

Elder's descriptions are certainly puzzles, and I do not feel like bidding without seeing the goods. The last time he listed "1814-15, Spanish Guiana, 1/4 & 1/2 & 1 Reals" &c. I bit, and they were all 1/2 reals of different sizes, but I kept them, giving me about eight different dies in all.

I should like to get the TORTOLA on half of a peso, and the same on 1/4 peso, but do not know anywhere the price they are likely to bring. Will you kindly give me a tip. I want to be sure of the one on 1/4 peso, for I have an order in for the 1/8, and do not care to buy duplicates at present prices.

I mean to bring with me a few photos, one of them of a token which Hetrich says is new--SONDER & CARPENTERS CARD. There are some other points which seem to look as if there were a lack of accurate observation in the preparation of the M&G list. I have some of them in the photos I mean to bring with me.

Very truly yours

Fred Sumner Smith.

March 28th, 1925

Dr. Fred Sumner Smith  
Chester, Conn.

Dear Dr. Smith:

Since I wrote my West Indian monograph, I have acquired several of the sous with the same counterstamp as on the silver coin which I illustrated. I have one with the same die used, and in addition another counterstamp of an incuse M. Also, two others similar from different dies.

I shall probably be at Elder's the three mornings of his sale, but will most likely be here in the afternoon.

I really am unable to advise you as to what the Tortola pieces will bring, as West Indian coins in this country never fetch consistent prices. The Tortolas, as a rule, are commoner than most of the other counterstamps. They ought not to be over four or five dollars.

Very truly yours,

Curator



FRED. SUMNER SMITH, M. D.  
CHESTER, CONN.

9 June 1927

Dear Mr. Wood;

Perhaps you will remember that I showed you a Mexican Revolutionary piece, Durango, 5c brass that you had not seen, and you made a cast of it.

Have you secured one yet? For selfish reasons I hope not, for I have picked up another, and have an idea that we might negotiate a trade, if you still lack that particular piece, for you probably have a bunch of duplicates in Civil War tokens and cards, which I lack.

If you care to add this piece to your collection, drop me a line, and I will send a list of wants in the C.W.cards.

I am tied up here with an invalid wife, and my aged mother, and handicapped by inefficient help in the house, and do not know when I can get away. I have a bunch of coins that I wish to show you, and get some information about. Have worn holes in my pockets carrying them about with me, in case I should suddenly have an opportunity to get to New York.

I have picked up a few of the Mexican Revolutionary coins since I saw you, but it is slow work. I thought I was going to get a nice bunch of rare ones, some time ago, but the dealer played a dirty trick on me, and I lost them.

My latest C.W.Token is one new to me, and I have never heard of anything like it--Cannon right, with 6 cannon-balls under the muzzle, surrounded by a wreath that looks like a string of Ws; Rev.Liberty head left, similar to Hettrich's die 430, but head much smaller, in a circle of 13 small stars.

Probably not unknown, but it is new to me.

Have you card of W.H.Brennan, 138 S.Salina St Syracuse, N.Y.? This is another one that is not in the book. I also have a uniface piece with one cent in a crude wreath; looks like a trial piece.

That will do for now, but I hope to see you before very long.

Very truly yours

Fred Sumner Smith.



June 11, 1927

Dr. Fred Sumner Smith,  
Chester, Conn.

Dear Sir:

I am afraid you were out of luck. Since I saw your Durango 5 centavo brass piece, I have gotten several of these. On the other hand I have no duplicates of Civil War tokens. No collection of these has come in to us for several years and a few duplicates we used to have, have long since been sold. I will be glad to see you any time that you can get to New York, but don't try to find me in July, as I will be away all that month. I will be glad to see any new Revolutionary coins you may have acquired. I really have paid very little attention of late to the Civil War tokens. Two or three we have had come in are new. I have given description to Dr. Hetrick. Why don't you do the same?

Very truly yours,

Curator



FRED. SUMNER SMITH, M. D.  
CHESTER, CONN.

23 Feb 1929

Dear Mr. Wood;

At Hesslein's last sale I got a coin which was catalogued as a Buelna peso, Wood #1.

It certainly looks like #1, but it is far too light in weight, judging it by your book; it weighs more like a #3.

I wish to make sure before I accept it and place it in my collection, so I am presuming to ask your opinion. If you think best, I am willing to stand the expense of having an assay made, to make sure. You showed me one which had been put to the test, and you showed me the gold that was obtained from ~~#####~~ filings from the coin, so you must know who can make the examination.

If it is a poor specimen of #3 I shall not want it, for I have a better one.

When you get out a second edition of the book I want one.

Very truly yours

Fred Sumner Smith

27th Feb., 1929

Dr. Fred Sumner Smith,  
Chester, Conn.

Dear Dr. Smith:

The Sinaloa dollar which you sent on, and which I am herewith returning, is my No. 1. There is absolutely no doubt about it, although the weight may be off. As a matter of fact, it is very difficult to cast coins wholesale and have anywhere near a proper weight.

Our second edition is now out; I will send you a copy and am enclosing a memorandum.

Very truly yours,

Curator



2d March, 1929

Dr. Fred. S. Smith,  
Chester, Conn:

Dear Mr. Smith:

Many thanks for the cheque and also for the stamps to pay for the returned coin. In recent years there have been occasional counterfeits made of our cents. We have several here that are undoubtedly fakes. Naturally, it is not a very paying business to counterfeit such a small coin, but now and then there seems to be an Italian who is willing to take the risk.

Very truly yours,

Curator